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TELEGRAM

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TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: HOUSE HEARING ON AFGHAN REFUGEES

1. HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS (CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ, CHAIRMAN) HAS INVITED DEPARTMENT TO TESTIFY AT HEARING, MARCH 26, ON U.S. POLICIES ON INDOCHINESE AND AFGHAN REFUGEES. RP ACTING DIRECTOR SHYSER WILL BE PRINCIPAL WITNESS AND FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS THAT PART OF HIS DRAFT STATEMENT PERTAINING TO AFGHAN REFUGEES:

QUOTE WHILE REFUGEE EMERGENCIES HAVE FORTUNATELY ABATED SOMEWHAT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, ANOTHER PROBLEM GROWS IN WESTERN ASIA. TODAY, 18 MONTHS AFTER THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, THOUSANDS OF AFGHANS CONTINUE TO FLEE INTO PAKISTAN EVERY DAY. THE 1.7 MILLION AFGHANS NOW IN
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PAKISTAN REPRESENT ONE-TENTH OF THE POPULATION OF AFGHAN-

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ISTAN AND CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST REFUGEE GROUP IN THE WORLD TODAY. SINCE DECEMBER, THEY HAVE BEEN ENTERING PAKISTAN AT THE RATE OF 130,000 PER MONTH. MANY AFTER THEIR HOMES WERE BOMBED, CROPS DESTROYED AND FLOCKS KILLED. THEY HAVE ENDURED GREAT HARDSHIPS IN THEIR FLIGHT TO REFUGE.

-----ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES ARE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 15, WITH THE REMAINDER FAIRLY EQUALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN ADULT MEN AND WOMEN. GROUPED IN TENT VILLAGES ESTABLISHED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN NEAR THE INDIAN BORDER, THE REFUGEES ARE SUBJECT TO THE HARSH EXTREMES OF HEAT AND COLD WHICH ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS REGION.

-----THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN HAVE RESPONDED MOST GENEROUSLY TO THE NEEDS OF THE REFUGEES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN ITSELF BEARS AROUND HALF THE COST -- OR ABOUT DOLL. 100 MILLION IN 1960 -- OF THE TOTAL RELIEF EFFORT. INDIRECT COSTS TO LAND AND WATER RESOURCES CAUSED BY THE CONCENTRATION OF REFUGEES ARE BORNE ENTIRELY BY PAKISTAN.

-----AFTER THE MASSIVE BUILD-UP OF POPULATION IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY LAST YEAR, THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES ASSUMED A ROLE AS THE LEAD AGENCY IN MOBILIZING AND COORDINATING INTERNATIONAL RELIEF EFFORTS. WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN, THE UNHCR DEVELOPED A SUPPORT PROGRAM IN THE SPRING OF 1960 AND THEN ISSUED SPECIAL APPEALS FOR DOLL. 100 MILLION, DIVIDED ABOUT EQUALLY BETWEEN FOOD AND NON-FOOD NEEDS.

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-----FOR 1961, THE UNHCR ORIGINALLY BUDGETED DOLL. 52.5 MILLION FOR AFGHAN PROGRAMS, ON THE BASIS OF A POPULATION OF 1.1 MILLION AFGHANS IN PAKISTAN AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1960. CLEARLY, THE SUBSEQUENT POPULATION INCREASES WILL FORCE THE BUDGET HIGHER, AND THE UNHCR AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN ARE NOW REVIEWING NEW RELIEF PLANNING ESTIMATES. THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, WHICH CHANNELS THE FOOD COMPONENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE, ESTIMATES FOR THIS YEAR A NEED FOR 512,000 TONS OF COMMODITIES, WITH AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF

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DOLS. 120 MILLION. OUR GOVERNMENT HAS LENT ITS BEST EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THIS HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM, WHICH ALSO UNDERGIRD'S OUR POLITICAL INTERESTS IN THIS STRATEGICALLY CRITICAL AREA. IN FY 1980, WE CONTRIBUTED DOLS. 43.7 MILLION IN CASH AND FOOD TO THE RELIEF EFFORT, OR NEARLY ONE-HALF OF THE TOTAL FOOD AND CASH CHANNELLED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. -----THIS FISCAL YEAR WE HAVE THUS FAR MADE TWO NEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AFGHAN RELIEF PROGRAM: FOOD WITH AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF DOLS. 25 MILLION AND A PLEDGE

OF DOLS. 18 MILLION FOR THE UNHCR.

-----WE EXPECT THE REFUGEE POPULATION IN PAKISTAN TO INCREASE TO AT LEAST TWO MILLION IN FY 1982, FOR WHICH WE WILL NEED A TOTAL OF DOLS. 24,150,000 FOR OUR PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNHCR'S PAKISTAN PROGRAM. FOOD FOR PEACE WILL PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT SUPPLIES OF FOODSTUFFS IN FY 1982. THE LEVEL OF THIS DONATION WILL BE DETERMINED LATER THIS YEAR FOLLOWING AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FOOD NEEDS OF AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN.

-----THE ENORMITY OF THIS PROBLEM AND ITS COMPELLING HUMAN AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS REQUIRE CONTINUED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. BECAUSE ITS FULL EXTENT IS STILL EMERGING, THE PLIGHT OF AFGHAN REFUGEES PLACES A CLAIM OF PRIORITY UPON THE ATTENTION AND GENEROSITY OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY. END OF QUOTE CLARK

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